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ABSTRACT

The leadership styles of 15 directors at Bowie State College (Maryland) was examined, using the Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) Self Survey. The instrument presents situations that show the leader's concern for job relationships and tasks. Directors were defined as mid-level managers with key administrative and supervisory responsibilities. In addition to comparing age, gender, race, education, and income level of respondents and nonrespondents, LEAD scores of respondents were analyzed by gender, age (40 and under and 41 and over), income ($33,000 and under and $33,001 and over), and race (blacks and white). Most of the directors indicated task-oriented responses to the 12 situations described. Those individuals who appeared less task-oriented had a background in the helping professions that, by training, emphasizes a less directive, less task-oriented approach to life situations, including program administration in higher education. Female directors were high on relationship and task. Directors over age 41 emphasized tasks more than younger directors, for whom relationships were important. Older directors were generally more consistent than younger directors in the relevance of the task. Better educated, older directors seemed more task-oriented and consistent than high school graduates and/or younger directors. (SW)

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Directors' Self Appraisal of Leadership Situations

at

Bowie State College

by

Wanda E. Gill

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Abstract

During July of 1985, College Directors were asked to complete the Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) Self Survey form developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard. The instrument presents situations which show the leader's concern for job relationships and tasks. The results are presented for fifteen (15) of the twenty-five (25) directors surveyed. The data are analyzed and presented for age, gender, race, education and income level of the group who responded to the survey and of the total group (survey return rate), and for leadership style. However, the number of respondents is so small that the results cannot be generalized. More research is needed in this area to determine how leadership style affects worker efficiency and productivity. If the leader's style impacts on worker satisfaction and task completion and if worker satisfaction and task completion affect how people interact with students, then the research results may have a bearing on student retention. It is the retention of students that concerns the author, hence, the research.

Introduction

Leadership studies have been conducted on leadership style (Blake and Mouton, Tannenbaum), leadership motivational structure (Fiedler), leader effectiveness (Argyris), leader humanism (McGregor, Maslow, Morrison and O'Hearne), motivation (Beer) and evaluation of the leader (Gill). Collectively, these studies suggest that there is no single effective leadership style, motivational process, measure of effectiveness, optimal level of humanism or singular dimension of evaluation of the leader. Rather, leadership is situational (Hersey and Blanchard). The leader's style seems to fit the work setting (Prentice), the maturity of the worker (Hersey and Blanchard), and the leader's experience with the workers in team or individual activities (Morrison).

The research which follows is based on the theoretical framework and survey tools developed by Hersey and Blanchard. Hersey and Blanchard developed an instrument, the Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (L.E.A.D.), which describes a situation and asks the respondent to select one of four possible actions that fit each situation. The L.E.A.D. Self Survey form is completed by the leader. It describes the course of action the leader would select in each situation. The choices indicate the amount of direction (task behavior) and support (relationship behavior) the leader provides. Other terms used to describe different types of the leader's task behavior, have been "authoritarian," "laissez-faire" and "democratic." Relationship behavior has been previously described as "production focused" or "people focused."

Hersey and Blanchard used the following definitions:

"Task behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication by explaining what each follower is to do as well as when, where and how tasks are to be accomplished."

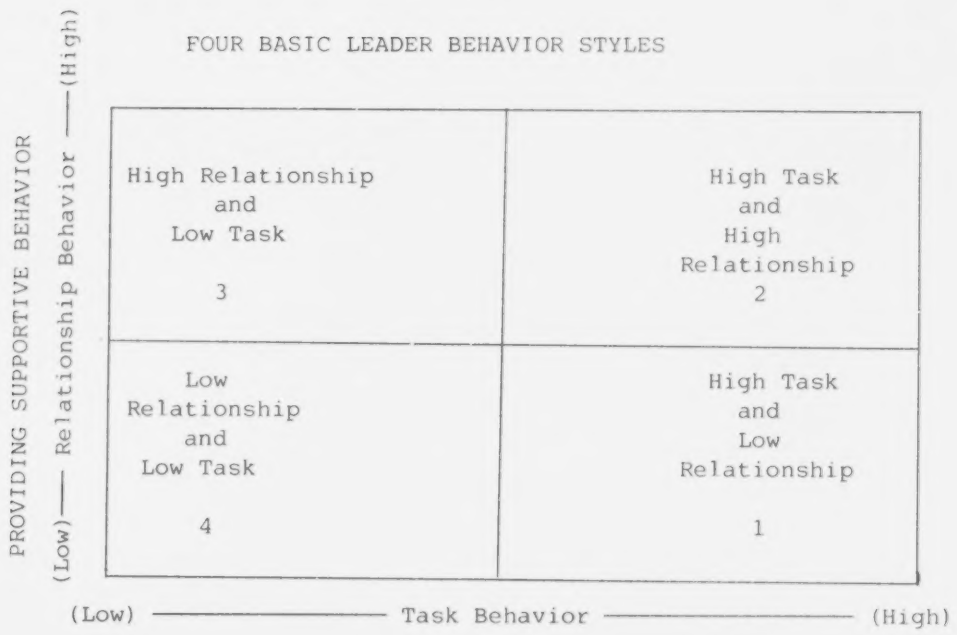
"Relationship behavior is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support, 'psychological strokes' and facilitating behaviors."

Hersey and Blanchard present four combinations of leader behaviors in a grid form. The four behavior styles are depicted in Table 1:

1. High task and low relationship
2. High task and high relationship
3. High relationship and low task
4. Low relationship and low task.

TABLE 1

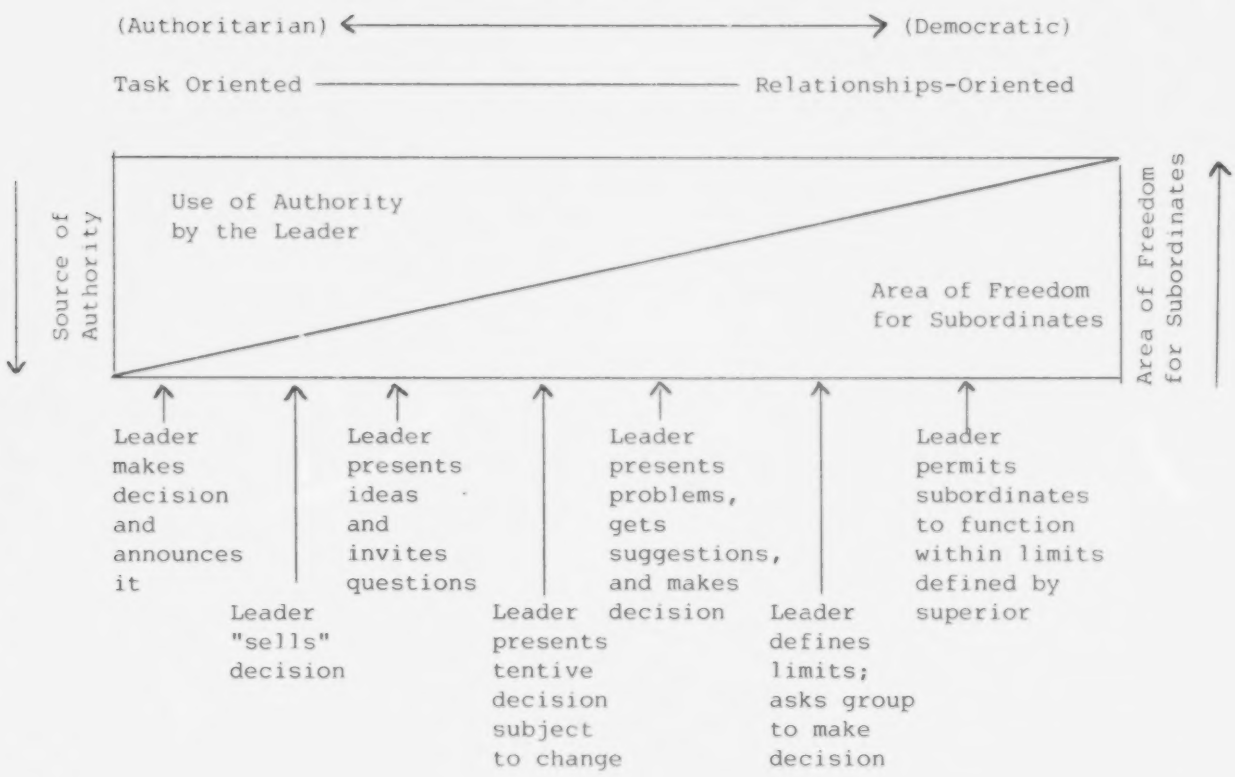
FOUR BASIC LEADER BEHAVIOR STYLES



(From Hersey and Blanchard)

According to the theory, the leader cannot be examined in isolation. The leader's behavior is examined in terms of the maturity, of habits and attitudes of subordinates, experience in working with subordinates, problem type and work priorities. The situational variables for Hersey and Blanchard are key to leader behaviors. Leader behaviors are diagrammed to show areas and degrees of freedom and authority (Table 2, from Hersey and Blanchard).

TABLE 2


(Authoritarian)
(Democratic)
Task Oriented
Relationships-Oriented
Source of Authority
Use of Authority by the Leader
Area of Freedom for Subordinates
Area of Freedom for Subordinates
Leader makes decision and announces it
Leader "sells" decision
Leader presents ideas and invites questions
Leader presents tentive decision subject to change
Leader presents problems, gets suggestions, and makes decision
Leader defines limits; asks group to make decision
Leader permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior

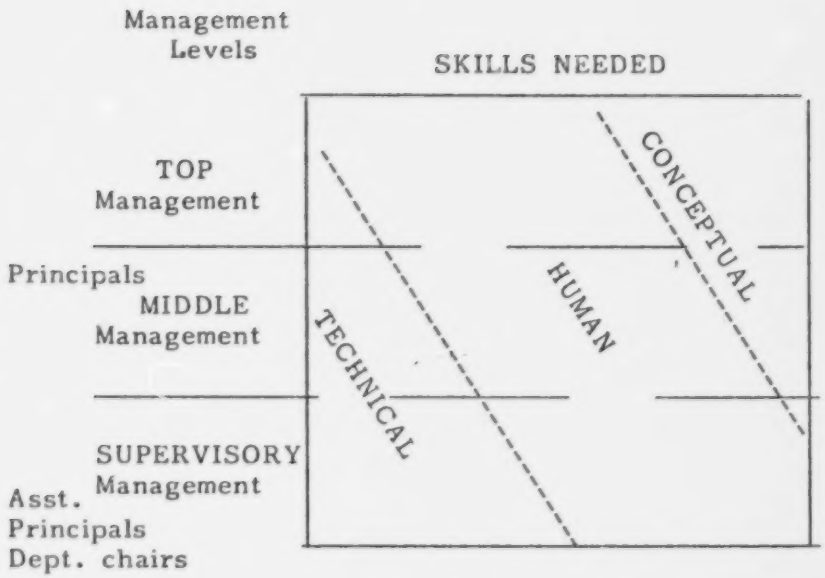
Continuum of leader behavior.

Hersey and Blanchard

The key to Table 2 is that the leader's behavior may fall along the continuum at different places, depending on the task and relationship and time factors. Implicit in the model is a degree of trust and respect for the leader by the subordinates. What is not stated is that the degree of mutual trust and respect frequently dictates the leader's behavior. Leaders tend to be more democratic where there is trust and respect (Argyris; Fiedler; Morrison). Indeed, human skills, more than technical and conceptual skills, are needed by managers at all levels of supervision (Hersey and Blanchard) as charted in Table 3.

The present study examines directors at Bowie State College. Directors are defined as mid-level managers with responsibilities of administration and supervision of offices that are key to the daily functioning of the college.

TABLE 3



Management skills necessary at various levels of an organization.

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard's
The Organization of Human Behavior

Method

On June 28, 1985, a survey form was sent to directors at Bowie State College. The survey consisted of a demographic data sheet on age, gender, race, educational level and income range and the L.E.A.D. Survey developed by Hersey and Blanchard. The survey was anonymous and the list of respondents was limited to twenty-five people. All twenty-five were administrators. Forms were returned thorugh the campus mail or delivered by summer student workers.

The demographic data sheet was analyzed for information on the number of returns and on leadership style. The number of returns was analyzed based on gender and race. Leadership style was analyzed for age, gender, race, educational level and income level. An institutional profile of the "typical" leadership style was presented.

Research questions were grouped for the number of survey forms returned and for leadership style.

The questions are presented below.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON SURVEY RETURN RATE

1. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the gender of the director?
2. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the race of the director?
3. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the race and gender of the director?
4. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the age of the director?
5. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the educational level of the director?
6. Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the income level of the director?

[Comparisons could not be made on age, income level or educational level since these factors are unknown to the researcher for the entire population sampled.]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON LEADERSHIP STYLE

1. Is there a difference among male versus female directors on the importance of the work task?
2. Is there a difference among male versus female directors on the importance of human relationships at work?

3. Does the age of the leader affect leadership style?

4. Does the income level of the leader affect leadership style?

5. Does the race of the leader affect leadership style?

6. Does the gender of the leader affect leadership style?

7. Does the educational level of the leader affect leadership style?

RESULTS: RESEARCH ON THE NUMBER OF SURVEYS RETURNED

Surveys were mailed to twenty-five (100%) individuals. Of this number, thirteen were females (52%) and twelve were males (48%). Fifteen people completed surveys (60% of those surveyed). Of those who completed surveys, seven (46%) were females. Of the twenty-five people (100%) surveyed, eighteen were black (72%) and seven white (28%). Of the fifteen who completed the survey form, ten (67%) were black and five (33%) were white. The black return rate compared to the black survey rate was lower than the white return rate compared to the white survey rate (10/18, 5/7 respectively).

With respect to age and gender, surveys were sent to twenty-five people: Nine black males (36%); nine black females (36%); three white males (12%); and, four white females (16%). Surveys were returned by fifteen people: seven black males (46.6%); three black females (20.2%); one white male (6.6%); and, four white females (26.6%).

Comparing the racial/gender return rate with the racial/gender survey rate: Seven-nineths (77.7%) of the black males surveyed returned forms; one-third (33.3%) of the black females surveyed returned forms; one-third (33.3%) of the white males surveyed returned forms; and all four (100%) of the white females surveyed returned forms. Black males and white females had a higher return rate than black females and white males.

Of the population surveyed, with respect to age: 1 (4%) was in the "below 25" age range; none (0%) were in the 26-30 age range; 8 (32%) were in the 31-35 age range; 6 (24%) were in the 36-40 age range; 3 (12%) were in the 41-45 age range; and 7 (28%) were in the "46 or over" age range.

Of the group of 15 who returned surveys: one (6.65%) was below 25 years of age; none (0%) were in the 26-30 years of age category; three (20%) were in the range of 31-35 years of age; four (26.7%) were in the 36-40 age range; one (6.65%) was in the age range of 41-45; and, six (40%) were in the age range of 46 or over. Ten (76.9%) of those who returned surveys were 36 years of age or older.

Comparing the return rate with the survey population rate for age: one/one (100%) was in the "below 25" years of age category; 0 (0%) were in the 26-30 years of age category; 3/8 (37.5%) were in the 31-35 years of age category; 4/6 (67%) were in the 36-40 years of age category; 1/3 (33%) was in the 41-45 years of age category; and, 6/7 (85.7%) were in the "46 or over" age category. The youngest and the oldest people in the survey had higher return rates than those in the 31-35 and 41-45 year age groups.

The highest educational level for the group surveyed indicated that: two (8%) had high school diplomas; 9 (36%) had Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees; two (8%) had Master of Science (M.S.) degrees; 4 (16%) had Master of Education (M.Ed.) degrees; 1 (4%) had an Education Doctorate (Ed.D.) degree; 3 (12%) had Philsophy Doctorate (Ph.D.) degrees; one (4%) had a Ph.D. and a Judicial Doctorate (J.D.) degree; and one (4%) had a Medical Doctorate (M.D.) degree.

Of the group who returned surveys: two (12.3%) had high school diplomas; five (33%) had Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees; two (13.3%) had Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees; two (13.3%) had Masters of Science (M.S.) degrees; three (20%) had Masters of Education (M.Ed.) degrees; and, one (6.6%) had a Ph.D.

and a J.D. degree. Eight, or 53.3%, of those who returned surveys had at least Master's degree.

Comparing the highest educational level attained of the group who returned suryeys with the total survey population: two/two (100%) of those with high school diplomas returned surveys; 5.9 (55.6%) of those with B.S. degrees returned surveys; 2/2 (100%) of those with M.A. degrees returned surveys; 2/2 (100%) of those with M.S. degrees returned surveys; 3/4 (75%) of those with M.Ed. degrees returned surveys; 0/1 (0%) of those with Ed.D. degrees returned surveys; 0/3 (0%) of those with Ph.D. degrees returned surveys; the 1/1 (100%) of those with Ph.D. and J.D. degrees returned surveys; and 0/1 (0%) of those with a Medical degree returned surveys. Those with doctoral degrees were less likely to return the survey than those with high school diplomas.

Income level was unavailable for three (3) of the individuals surveyed. However, of the remaining twenty-two (22) people surveyed, two (9.1%) made less than $18,000; none (0%) made between $18,001 and $23,000; two (9.1%) made between $23,001 and $28,000; nine (41%) made between $28,001 and $33,000; three (13.6%) made between $33,001 and $38,000; three (13.6%) made between $38,001 and $44,000; and, three (13.6%) made over $44,001. Fifteen (15) people, or 68%, earned over $28,001 per annum. Nine (9) people or 40.9% earned over $33,001 per annum.

Of the group of fifteen people who returned the surveys, two (13.3%) reported incomes below $18,000; two (13.3%) reported incomes in the $23,001-$28,000 range; five (33.3%) reported incomes in the $28,001-$33,000 range; one (6.7%) reported income in the $33,001-$38,000 range; two (13.3%) reported incomes in the $38,001-$44,000 range and three (20%) reported incomes over $44,001.

Comparing the survey return group with the entire group surveyed: two/two (100% of those in the category) made less than $18,000; none (0%) made between $18,001-$23,000; 2/2 (100% of those in the category) made between $23,001 and $28,000; 5/9 (55% of those in the category) made between $28,001 and $33,000; 1/3 (33.3% of those in the category) made between $33,001 and $38,000; 2/3 (67% of those in the category) made between $38,001 and $44,000; and, 3/3 (100% of those in the category) made over $44,001. All of those people in the lowest and highest salary categories returned forms. In other words, everyone in the "below $18,000" salary category who was sent a survey returned his/her form and everyone who was sent a survey in the "over $44,001" category returned his/her form.

The age, gender, race, income and educational level data of those who returned forms compared to those who did not return forms yielded significant data. Black males and white females had a higher return rate than black females and white males. The oldest and the youngest people sampled had the highest return rates. All participants with high school diplomas returned surveys. Of the six people with doctoral degrees or beyond, only one returned the survey form. The more educated the participants were in the group sampled, the lower the number of survey forms returned. With respect to income, all of the participants in the lower salary ranges returned forms and all of those with incomes over $44,001 returned forms. Black males and white females at the lower and upper income levels with Master's degrees or below were more likely to return forms than the surveyed sample of white males and black females within the median income range with doctoral degrees or the equivalent. All of these generalizations come from an extremely small population (15 returned surveys from 25 mailed out). There is no information available on the ten people who chose not to complete the survey form.

FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON THE NUMBER OF SURVEY FORMS RETURNED

Research Question 1: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the gender of the director?

There is a difference in the number of survey forms returned based on gender. Males had a higher number of survey forms returned than females.

Research Question 2: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the race of the director?

There is a difference in the number of surveys returned based on race. The black return rate was significantly lower than the number of blacks in the population sampled. The white return rate was significantly higher than the whites in the population surveyed.

Research Question 3: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the race and gender of the director?

There is a difference in the number of surveys returned based on the race and gender of the director. White women and black men returned more surveys than black women and white men.

Research Question 4: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the age of the director?

There is a difference in the number of surveys returned based on the age of the director. Younger and older directors (age 30 and below and 46 and above) were more likely to return surveys than median age directors (ages 31-45) in the total population surveyed.

Research Question 5: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the educational level of the director?

There is a difference in the number of returns based on the educational level of the director. The least educated (high school diploma) were more likely to return forms and the most educated (doctoral level) were least likely to return forms.

Research Question 6: Will there be a difference in the number of survey returns based on the income level of the director?

There is a difference in the number of surveys returned based on the income level of the director. Those directors who made the least amount of money (below $18,000), and those directors who made the most money (over $44,001) were more likely to return survey forms than those directors at the median income level (between $28,001 and $33,000).

FINDINGS: RESEARCH ON LEADERSHIP STYLE

Aggregate scores on the LEAD questionnaire were computed for the population who returned surveys based on gender, age, income level, race and educational level. Those scores were examined and compared based on cut-offs for the selected demographic data. For gender, males were compared to females. For age, those 41 and over were compared to those 40 and under. For income level, those directors earning $33,001 and over were compared to those directors earning $33,000 and under. For race, blacks were compared to whites. Following are the results of the aforementioned comparisons.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON LEADERSHIP STYLE

Research Question 1: Is there a difference among male versus female directors on the importance of the work task?

Finding: There does not appear to be a difference among males and females on the importance of the work task. Generally speaking, the female directors who returned surveys appeared just as task oriented as their counterparts.

Research Question 2: Is there a difference among male versus female directors on the importance of human relationships at work?

Finding: There does appear to be a difference among male versus female directors on the importance of human relationships at work. The women were consistently high on relationship and task whereas men tended to be low on relationships. One male director was low on task and low on relationship on most questions. This individual was the single male exception to the high task finding in research question 1.

Research Question 3: Does the age of the leader affect leadership style?

Finding: The age of the director does appear to affect leadership style. Directors who were age 41 or over, emphasized the task at all times. All answers were consistently high on task. Responses sometimes indicated low relationship. Directors who were age 40 and below, emphasized high relationships consistently.

Research Question 4: Does the income level of the leader affect leadership style?

Finding: The income level of the director does not appear to affect leadership style in the income ranges of $33,001 and over and $33,000 and under.

Research Question 5: Does the race of the leader affect leadership style?

Finding: The race of the director does not appear to affect leadership style.

Research Question 6: Does the gender of the leader affect leadership style?

Finding: The gender of the leader does affect leadership style. The males tended to be low on relationship and high on task whereas the women were high on both relationship and task.

Research Question 7: Does the educational level of the leader affect leadership style?

Findings: The educational level of the leader does appear to affect leadership style. When comparing those individuals with doctoral degrees to individuals with high school diplomas, those with doctoral degrees or above were consistently high on task whereas those individuals with high school diplomas were inconsistent in their administrative, situational leadership behavior: scoring high on task, then low on task, high on relationship, then low on relationship and task. There appeared to be less consistency in the responses of these individuals. The mid-level group which represented most directors appeared to be concerned with both task and relationship.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There appear to be some differences in the leadership style of the leader based on the leader's gender, age and educational level. For female directors, relationship and task are both important. For male directors, task is consistently more important than relationships. Directors over the age of 41 were consistently high on task. Directors age 40 and under scored high on relationship. The educational level of the leader appears to have an impact on leadership style. Those directors with advanced degrees were consistently high on task. Those directors with high school diplomas were inconsistent in their responses to the situational leadership scenarios described on the LEAD Instrument.

There were several areas in which there were no differences. There did not appear to be a difference between male and female directors on the importance of the work task. The income range and race of the director did not appear to be a factor.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest differences in the leadership styles of the directors based on a number of factors. Female directors are high on relationship as well as task. Directors over age 41 emphasize task more than younger directors, for whom relationships are important. The educational level of the director is also related to leadership style. Older directors are generally more consistent than younger directors in the relevance of the task. It can be concluded that better educated older directors are more task oriented and consistent than high school graduates and/or younger directors.

There are several demographic variables that do not appear to be related to the leadership styles of the directors at Bowie State College. The findings suggest that the income of the director is not related to the leadership style. The race or ethnicity of the director does not appear to be a factor in the leadership style of the director. Gender relativity to the importance of the task does not appear to be a factor in the leadership style of the director. It can be concluded that women directors are just as task-oriented as male directors. It can further be concluded that directors receiving low salaries (mostly women) do just as good a job, in terms of leadership style, as those directors who earn a high salary. In this case, since salary does not appear to be linked to performance based on leadership style, women directors may be able to seek justification for equitable pay based on leadership style, as one factor used to evaluate performance and merit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was a first attempt to examine the leadership styles of directors at Bowie State College. It should be noted that almost all of the directors who completed the L.E.A.D. instrument indicated mostly task-oriented responses to the twelve situations described. Those individuals who appeared less task-oriented have a background in the helping professions which, by training, emphasizes a less directive, less task-oriented approach to life situations, including program administration in higher education. It is commendable that a high percentage of those surveyed returned survey forms.

The following recommendations which focus on a few are made for all.

- Human Relations Training for all male directors.
- Re-examination of director's salaries for pay equity for some women based on actual responsibility.
- Situational leadership training sessions for all directors by an outside consultant.
- Incentives for educational advancement.
- More research on leadership styles of directors at Bowie State College.